



MITT ROMNEY
GOVERNOR

KERRY HEALEY
LT. GOVERNOR

EDWARD A. FLYNN
SECRETARY

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Public Safety
Department of Fire Services
P.O. Box 1025 ~ State Road

Stow, Massachusetts 01775

(978) 567~3100 Fax: (978) 567~3121



STEPHEN D. COAN
STATE FIRE MARSHAL

THOMAS P. LEONARD
DEPUTY STATE FIRE MARSHAL

For immediate release:
Contact:

September 3, 2004
Jennifer Mieth
(978) 567-3381

Candle Cause of Fatal Brookline Blaze

State Fire Marshal Stephen D. Coan announced that the most probable cause of last night's fatal fire at 88 Pleasant Street was an unattended candle. Investigators believe a candle left burning after residents went to sleep ignited the fire. The heat and poisonous gases of the fire killed a woman on the third floor and left a man in critical condition. The names of the victims are being withheld pending formal identification and notification of next of kin.

The Brookline Fire Department and State Police in the State Fire Marshal's Fire Investigation Unit investigated the fire.

208 Fires Caused 3 Civilian Deaths and \$4.3 Million in Damages

In 2002, 208 candles fires were reported to the Massachusetts Fire Incident Reporting System (MFIRS). These fires caused three civilian deaths, 20 civilian injuries, 22 firefighter injuries and an estimated dollar loss of \$4.3 million in damages. Over 90% of candle fires occur in homes and half start in the bedroom.

Burn Candles Inside One-Foot Circle of Safety

State Fire Marshal Coan warned, "Do not leave candles burning when you go to sleep or when you leave the room. Candles left burning unattended are how most candle fires start."

Chief Offers Candle Safety Tips

- Burn candles in the center of a 1-foot **Circle of Safety**, free of anything that can burn.
- Stay in the same room with burning candles; do not leave unattended.
- Burn candles on a non-combustible surface such as a ceramic saucer, or plate.
- Be sure to snuff out candles before falling asleep, going out, or leaving the room.
- Teach everyone in the family the rules of safe candle use.
- Keep candles out of reach of small children and pets.

For more information on candle fire safety online go to
http://www.mass.gov/dfs/osfm/pubed/flyers/candle_fire_safety.pdf

